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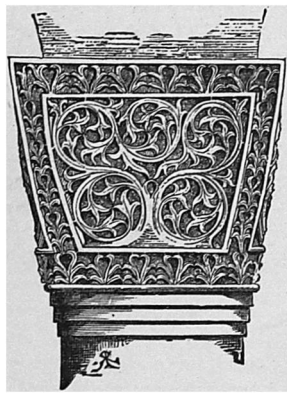
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OUR COLORED PLATE.

STUDY IN BYZANTINE AND ARABIAN STYLES AND COLORS.

WHEN Byzantium, or Constantinople, as we now know it, became the capital of the Roman Empire and the first Christian Emperor made his Court at that romantic city, there flocked to it the true believers and the adventurers from all parts of the known world. As Constantine brought with him the debased arts of Rome, so did the followers



BYZANTINE CAPITAL.

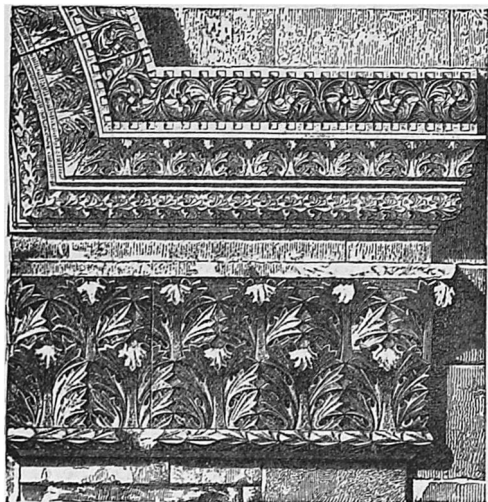
of the Empire carry into the new capital the customs, the occupations and the arts of their various countries, and all this conglomeration of styles and forms was molded into the decoration and adornment of Constantinople. From this source came that combination of Roman, Greek and Oriental that distinguishes the Byzantine.

Mr. Wornum, in his Analysis of Ornament,

says: "The peculiar views of the early Christians in matters of art had, before the establishment of Christianity by the State, no material influence in society, though the pagan idolatries found many vigorous opponents long before the time of Constantine. During the first and second centuries Christian arts were limited to symbols, and were then never applied as decorations, but as exhortations to faith and piety. All Christian decoration rests upon this foundation—the same spirit of symbolism prevailing throughout, until the return to the heathen principle of beauty (to the esthetic) in the period of the Renaissance."

The early Christian designers, most of them no doubt connected with the Church, seem rather to have avoided than sought beauty in these peculiar forms, from precisely the same feeling as that which at an earlier time animated the Egyptians. The lily, the emblem of purity, is as common as the lotus was in Egypt, though having a very different meaning; and a peculiarly angular rendering of the Greek acanthus was likewise used.

The reason why the beautiful forms of Greece were rejected seems to have been no other than that they were pagan in their origin. Paganism, however, consisted solely in forms, not in the colors adopted; but as paganism declined, the scroll and other ornaments were admitted, the foliage always being rendered in a peculiarly formal and conventional manner. A direct appeal to nature was unknown; the artist selected his model, traced it, learned every detail by memory, and multiplied his mechanical copies wherever a representation of its subject was demanded. In all its precious and subtle qualities each successive reproduction in-



BYZANTINE STONE CAPITAL AND FRIEZE.

evitably deteriorated a step further from the original example. The same causes, however, which prevented the improvement of the style, aided in saving it from extinction. An art for the most part mechanical was easily taught, and its plainly marked characteristics were not easily lost in passing from hand to hand and from country to country.

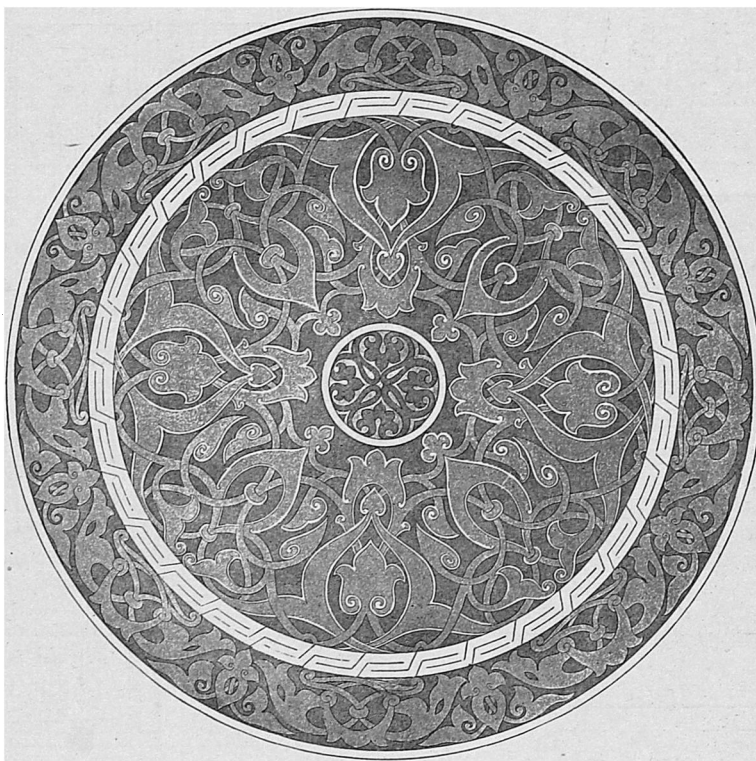
The Byzantine inaugurated a new and more refined principle into the treatment and design of the capital of the columns and other carved embellishments, that of subordinating the foliage decoration to the outline. It carried the beauty and variety of the Corinthian foliated capital to the utmost pitch, and drew out of the classic types an astonishing number of refined and elegant varieties of the utmost richness and significance, and wherein, despite its conventionalization, the foliage evinces greater sympathy with living herb-
age than had been seen before.

Mosaic was an essential element of decoration as the dome was of construction, and Mr. Davidson, in his "Grammar of Coloring," has divided the mosaic used in this style under three heads:

1. Glass mosaic, used for walls.
2. Glass tessellation, inlaid in church furniture.
3. Marble tessellation, for pavements.

In the first division the peculiarity consists in the employment of mosaic to represent and reproduce only the forms of existing objects, such as figures, architectural features and foliage, and these were generally relieved by shading and upon a gold ground, the whole being bedded upon the wall cement. The pieces of glass employed in this were irregularly shaped and sized, of all colors, but with a ground that was usually gold. The manner of execution was large and coarse, though the effect was gorgeous, luxurious and solemn.

The glass tessellation was the insertion into



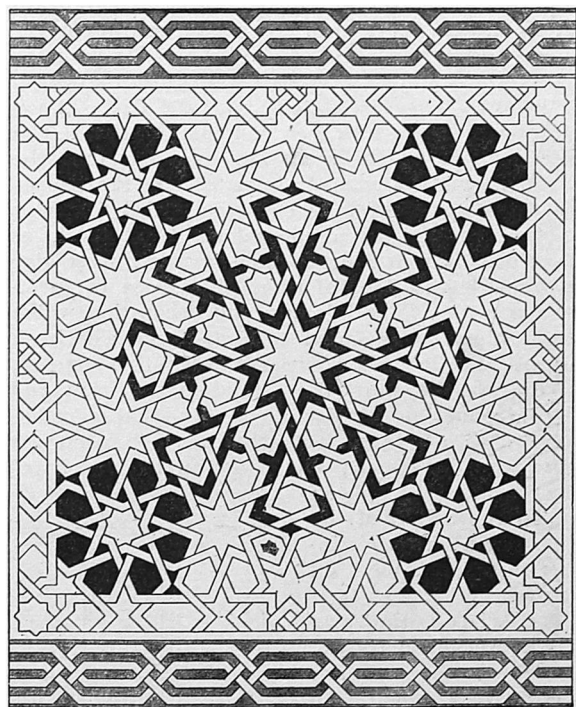
ARABIAN ROSETTE.

grooves, cut into white marble to the depth of about half an inch, of small cubes of variously colored and gilded "smalto," as the Italians called, and still call, the material of which mosaic is composed, and in the arrangement of these simple forms in such geometrical combinations as to compose the most elaborate patterns.

The marble tessellation has in our day been most successfully imitated in encaustic tile pavement, and may be described as an arrangement of small cubes usually of porphyry or serpentine, reddish, purple and green color, composing geometrical patterns in grooves cut in the white marble slabs which formed the pavement. The contrast between these two colors produced a monotonous but always harmonious effect.

But the career of the Byzantine style, like that of the Byzantine state, was, with the exception of slight intervals, one of uninterrupted decline from the time of Justinian, and the successive disasters of the empire were reflected in the history of its architecture.

The general decay of the State in wealth, true greatness and energy, all that fosters genius and inspires artistic enterprise, prevented anything like the energetic and daring spirit that in Gothic and Arabian lands, led to such a variety of marvelous and beautiful productions. It was the decline of wealth, not any inherent weakness or defect in the style, that caused this fall, and had the Byzantine been the style of a rising instead of a falling state, it would probably have met a very different fate;



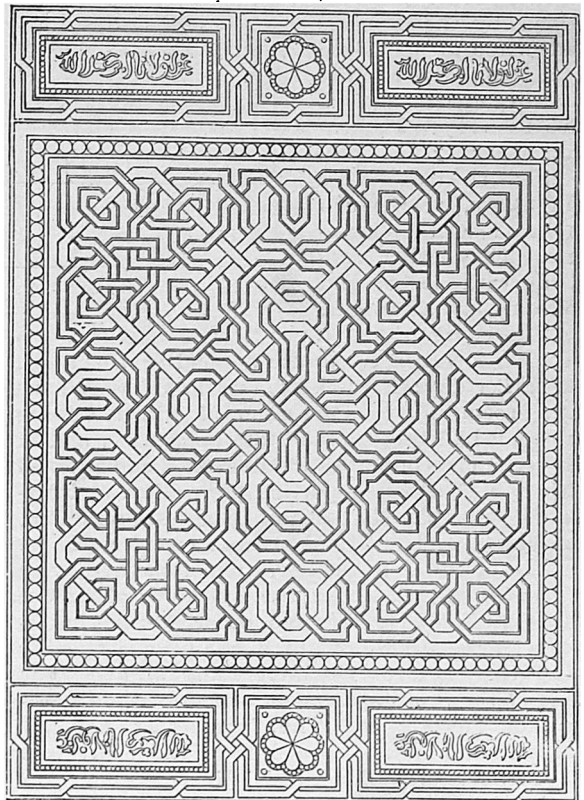
FROM THE COURT OF THE LIONS, IN THE ALHAMBRA.

indeed, the recommendation for it is sufficient that it was no sooner formed than it was wrought into one of the greatest architectural compositions that yet remains to please and instruct mankind.

When Mohammed invaded the nations hostile to his creed and peopled the conquered countries from the hosts of his followers, he naturally brought into the life of the subjugated races a flood of new ideas and new forms. Such a violent change in the condition and circumstances of numberless peoples it would not have been possible to bring about without resulting, as one of its effective phases, in the establishment of a new style, and that known as the Mohammedan or Arabian was speedily formulated. It did not displace or override the indigenous art of the various countries where it prevailed; it assimilated the peculiarities of each, and so transmuted them, that although wherever the religion of Mohammed prevails the decoration will at once confess the fact, still the local or national peculiarities of each country remain prominent.

The Arabs, a nomadic race living in tents, do not seem to have been great builders even in their cities. We have no authentic accounts or existing remains of very early buildings even in Mecca or Medina, as the oldest mosques in these cities have been completely rebuilt, and we therefore must depend entirely upon the examples from Egypt and Syria for our knowledge of ancient Saracenic architecture.

The surfaces of the interiors of most Mohammedan buildings are covered with the most exquisite decorations in color. Imitations of natural objects being forbidden by the Koran (a prohibition



FROM A CABINET IN THE ALHAMBRA.



ANCIENT COLORING AND STYLES OF DECORATION APPLIED TO MODERN USES.

A Series of Studies by RAFAEL GUASTAVINO, Architect.

occasionally, but very rarely, infringed), the Saracenic artists, whose instincts as decorators seem to have been unrivalled, fell back upon geometrical and flowing patterns and inscriptions, and upon the use of tiles, mosaics, inlays, patterns impressed on plaster, and every possible device for harmoniously enriching the surfaces with which they had to deal. Windows were commonly filled by tracery executed in stone or in plaster, and glazed with stained glass; many of the open spaces in buildings were occupied with grilles, executed in wood and most effective in design. In India, where the vast quantities of rich material made such elaborate work possible, these traceries and the wooden grilles were replaced by perforated slabs of marble. The most refined beauty entered into this work, and frequently the panels of this marble were each pierced with a different pattern; others, again, had a background of twining stems and leaves, with palm or banyan trees growing over it, every branch and leaf, owing to the fine piercings of the marble, standing out in great distinctness.

A remarkable characteristic of the architecture of the Mohammedans is the constant insertion of circular-headed openings within square panels, and the use, in their horizontal general composition, of the pointed arch, a feature afterward introduced into the Gothic. With their natural feeling for the more graceful forms, it is noticeable that they failed to adopt the round arch of the Byzantines, which would have been more in keeping and more congenial with the general spirit of Arabian ornamentation. That there was no insurmountable bar to its admission is evident from their later adoption of it in Spain, where in the best age of the style, the pointed arch does not appear.

The Arabian decorators worked under conditions that excluded from their use the noblest elements of beauty, but they so employed the license allowed them as to produce a style that needs little indulgence on the grounds of its limitations in judging of its merits. It does not possess the very highest qualities, it is true; it is not the architecture and ornament of holiness, but of pleasure, and though applied to mosques it was essentially a palatial style. It was the style of palaces, of fountains and of bowers, designed to mingle with and reflect the hues of everything lovely around it in nature, but to breathe nothing higher, even in a mosque; for the heaven of a Mussulman was but an idealization of earth, a belief with which palaces, and temples, and tombs are fully in harmony.

The religion of Islam involves something purer and higher than this for those capable of receiving it, but the popular notion of it is the one that inspired the Arabian style, which was modeled in a purely terrestrial mold—a style of refined physical enjoyment, in unison with and thrilled with the sentiment of all that is delicious and beautiful on earth. The qualities sought by the Saracenic decorators were exquisite elegance and grace of form, combined with minuteness and gorgeous richness of ornament, and in these qualities their style may be said to approach perfection. In some of its branches it seems the very quintessence

richness and elegance, a style made up of graces—the poetry without the prose of decoration, in which all that is most pleasing and agreeable is brought together, to produce the most romantic and fairy-like *ensemble* art is capable of doing; the predominance of fancy and feeling over judgment in the ornamentation is compensated for by the preponderance of judgment in the construction, bringing about a perfection of form which approves itself as the work of an intellectual as well as a graceful people.



DECORATION FOR PANEL.

COLORINGS.

It might reasonably be supposed that colors used in outside painting would be selected with due regard to their durability, but the faded colors so frequently seen proves very conclusively that some painters either do not use proper judgment or do not know what to use.

Among the durable colors may be named the following: In black, lampblack and vegetable

black; in yellow, yellow ochre and Naples yellow; chrome yellow turns dark in bad air; in reds, Venetian red, Indian red, Madder lake; carmine lake, vermillion and chrome red are not good for outside work; in blue, ultramarine is the only permanent one. Among the most durable and reliable colors may be named the Ochres, raw and burnt Umbers and Siennas, the reds named above, Van Dyke brown and their mixtures. Raw Umber is very durable, either in water or oil, and mixes with other pigments without injury. Yellow ochre can be mixed with lime without injury, and is thus well adapted to distemper painting.

Among the non-durable colors are all manufactured chemical colors; Chrome yellow, Chrome green, Prussian blue, Cobalt, Antwerp blue, Indigo will all fade, either singly or in combination. Zinc white, though of less body than white lead, is more delicate and durable, and should be used at the sea side especially, as sea air is particularly injurious to lead.

Greens direct from copper, arsenic, etc., are much more durable than mixed ones, although, of course, all productions of arsenic are more or less injurious to health.

In a warm light, yellow becomes totally lost, but is less diminished than all other colors, excepting white, by distance.

The stronger tones of any color subdue its fainter hues in the same proportion as opposite colors and contrasts exalt them.

Of all colors, except white, yellow contrasts black most powerfully.

The sensible effects of yellow are gay, gaudy, glorious, full of lustre, etc., and its impression on the mind partakes of these characters.

Red in connection with yellow becomes hot and advancing; but mixed with blue, it becomes cool and retiring.

Next to green, purple is the most generally pleasing, and has been celebrated as a regal or imperial color, as much perhaps from its rareness in a pure state as from its individual beauty.

Purple, when inclining toward redness, is a regal, magisterial and pompous color. In its effects on the mind it partakes principally, however, of the powers of its ruling color, blue.

The harmonizing contrast of citrine is a deep purple.

The harmonizing contrast of olive is a deep orange.

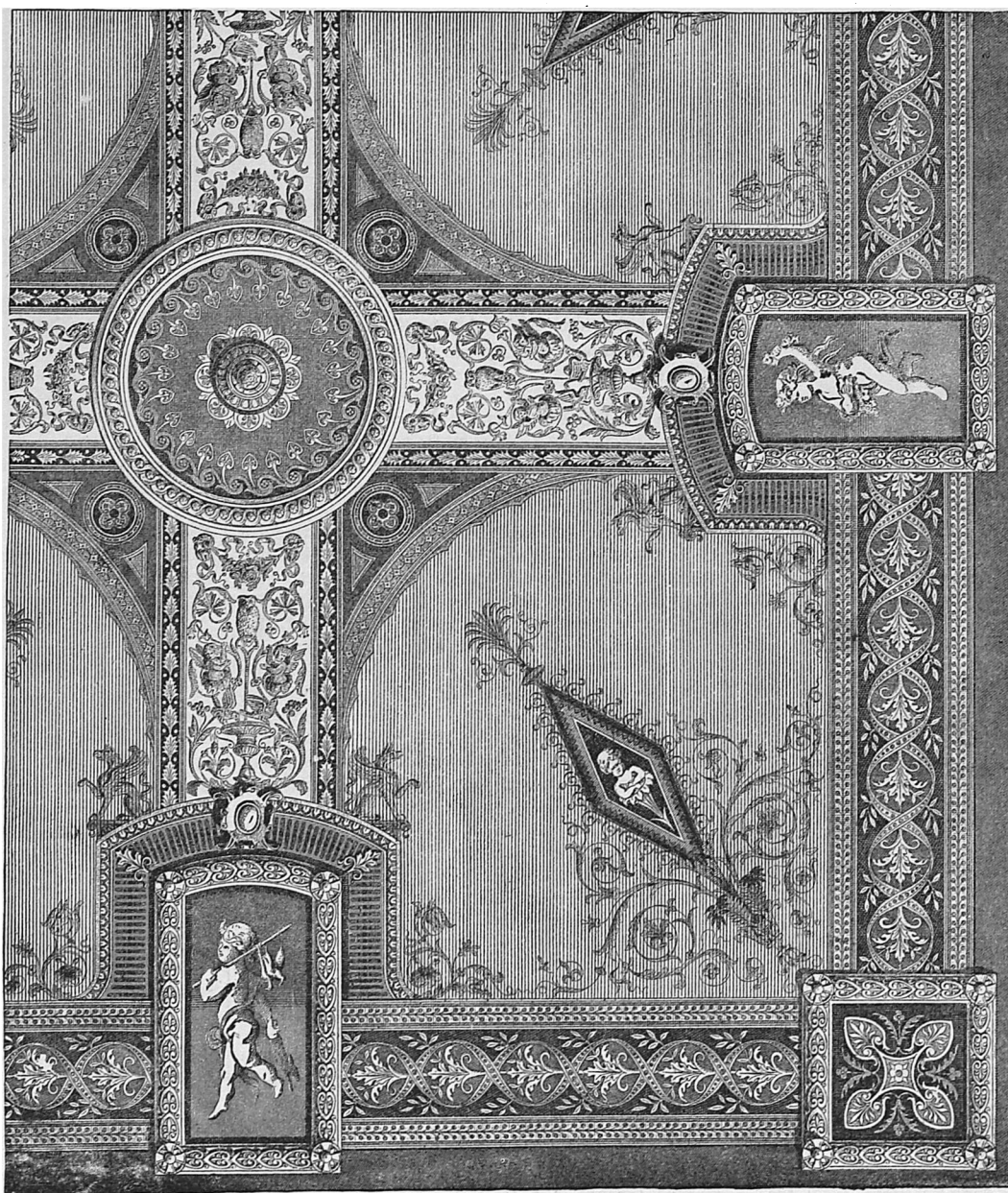
Bronze is an advancing color in painting.

Of all compound colors green is the most effective, distinct and striking.

As green is the most general color of vegetable nature, and principal in foliage, so red, its harmonizing color, and compounds of red, are most general and principal in flowers.

One coat of paint should be thoroughly dry before another is applied; for if the upper surface of paint dry before the surface beneath it, it will crack by the expansion and contraction of the under surface as the oil evaporates and dries.

Impure black is brown, but black in its purity is a cold color, and communicates this property to all eight colors; thus it blues white, greens yellow, purples red, and degrades blue; hence the artist errs who regards black as of nearest affinity to hot and brown colors,



DECORATION FOR CEILING.